

RESOLUTION NO. RS2019-1564

A resolution honoring the service of Senator Thelma Harper, the first African-American woman elected to the Tennessee State Senate and the longest serving female State Senator.

WHEREAS, Thelma Harper was elected to the Tennessee State Senate in 1991, making her the first African-American woman to be elected to the State Senate; and

WHEREAS, following her election, Senator Harper served her constituents with passion and distinction, and was repeatedly re-elected to maintain her seat for 28 years -- making her the longest serving female State Senator in Tennessee history; and

WHEREAS, Senator Harper was born in Brentwood, Tennessee on December 2, 1940 and went on to graduate with a bachelor's degree from Tennessee State University in 1978; and

WHEREAS, before serving in the Senate, Senator Harper was elected to the Metropolitan Council of Nashville and Davidson County in 1983, where she served for 8 years as an effective representative for Council District 2 through 1991; and

WHEREAS, among her major accomplishments while serving as a Council representative was the closing of the Bordeaux Landfill; and

WHEREAS, during her career in the Tennessee General Assembly, Senator Harper was instrumental in passing legislation to aid Tennessee's most vulnerable citizens -- particularly women, children, and the elderly -- and she has proven to be an invaluable advocate for the people of Tennessee and Nashville; and

WHEREAS, on March 24, 2018, Senator Harper bade farewell to her beloved husband, Paul W. Harper, who passed away at age 79; and

WHEREAS, after nearly 40 years of public service, including 28 years as a beloved State Senator and 8 years as a Metro Council member, Senator Harper announced her retirement from politics; and

WHEREAS, in this politically divided time, Senator Harper has done the unthinkable and has earned heartfelt respect and admiration from colleagues on all sides of the political spectrum; and

WHEREAS, although not chief among her more important achievements, it bears mentioning that Senator Harper also owns a fabulous collection of hats.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. That the Metropolitan Council hereby goes on record as honoring the legacy of devoted public service embodied by Senator Thelma Harper.

Section 2. That the Metropolitan clerk be directed to submit a copy of this Resolution to Senator Thelma Harper.

Section 3. That this Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.

INTRODUCED BY:

Kathleen Murphy

Member of Council